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AN ORATION DELIVERED AT CONCORD,

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ORATION.

FELLOW CITIZENS,

THE voice of patriotic and filial duty has called us together, to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of an ever memorable day. The subject, which this occasion presents to our consideration, almost exceeds the grasp of the human mind. The appearance of a new state in the great family of nations is one of the most important topics of reflection, that can ever be addressed to us. In the case of America, the interest, the magnitude, and difficulty of this subject are immeasurably increased. Our progress has been so rapid, the interval has been so short between the first plantations in the wilderness and the full developement of our political institutions; there has been such a visible agency of single characters in affecting the condition of the country, such an almost instantaneous expansion of single events into consequences of incalculable importance, that we find ourselves deserted by almost all the principles and precedents, drawn from the analogy of other states. Men have here seen, felt, and acted themselves, what in most other countries has been the growth of centuries.

Take your station for instance on Connecticut river. Every thing about you whatsoever you behold or approach, bears witness, that you are a citizen of a powerful and prosperous state. It is just seventy years, since the towns, which you now contemplate with admiration as the abodes of a numerous, increasing, refined, enterprising population, safe in the enjoyment of life's best blessings, were wasted and burned by the savages of the wilderness; and their inhabitants by hundreds,—the old and the young, the minister of the gospel, and the mother with her new born babe,

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—were wakened at midnight by the warhoop, dragged from their beds, and marched with bleeding feet across the snow-clad mountains—to be sold as slaves into the cornfields and kitchens of the French in Canada. Go back eighty years farther; and the same barbarous foe is on the skirts of your oldest settlements, at your doors. As late as 1676, ten or twelve citizens of Concord were slain or carried into captivity, who had gone to meet the savage hordes in their attack on Sudbury, in which the brave Captain Wadsworth and his companions fell.

These contrasts regard the political strength of our country; the growth in national resources presents a case of increase still more astonishing, though less adapted to move the feelings. By the last valuation, the aggregate property of Massachusetts and Maine was estimated at something less than three hundred millions. By the valuation made in 1780, the property of Massachusetts and Maine was estimated at eleven millions.

This unexampled rapidity of our national growth, while it gives to our history more than the interest of romance, leaves us often in doubt, what is to be ascribed to the co-operation of a train of incidents and characters, following in long succession upon each other; and what is to be referred to the vast influence of single important events. On the one hand, we think we trace a series of causes and effects, running back into the history of the dark ages in Europe, and visibly exerting an influence on the American colonies; and on the other, we witness, a rapidity, an energy, a precision in the movements of the nation toward improvement and power, which seem to characterize the agency of individual events and men. In the first view, we feel constrained to surrender up the fortunes of our country, as a portion of the chain of events, which lengthens onward, by blind fatality, from the creation of the world, and brings about, in each successive age, the same routine of rise, progress, and decay. In the other view, we behold the action of a new and original political life, a fresh and hopeful national existence; nourished, strengthened, and matured under the operation of peculiar causes of unexampled energy.

That great, that astonishing incident in human affairs, the Revolution of America, as seen on the day of its portentous, or rather let me say, of its auspicious commencement, is the theme of our present consideration. To what shall we direct our thoughts? On the one hand, we behold a connexion of events; the time and circumstances of the original discovery; the system of colonization; the settlements of the pilgrims; their condition, temper, and institutions; their singular political relation with the mother country; their long and doubtful struggle with the savage tribes; their collisions with the royal governors; their co-operation in the British wars; with all the influences of their geographical and physical condition; uniting to constitute what I may

call the political national education of America, by forming the public mind, nerving the arm, and firing the heart for the events of that day, which we now commemorate. When we take this survey, we feel that we ought to divide the honours of the Revolution with the great men of the colony in every generation; with the Winslows and the Pepperells, the Cookes and the Mathers, the Winthrops and the Bradfords, and all who labored and acted in the cabinet the desk, or the field, for the one great cause. On the other hand, when we dwell upon the day itself, every thing else seems lost in the comparison. Had our forefathers failed, on that day of trial, which we now celebrate; had their votes and their resolves (as was tauntingly predicted on both sides of the Atlantic) ended in the breath, in which they began; had the rebels laid down their arms, as they were commanded; and the military stores, which had been frugally treasured up for the crisis, been, without resistance, destroyed;—then the Revolution had been at an end, or rather never had been begun; the heads of Hancock and Adams and their brave colleagues would have been exposed in ghastly triumph on Temple-bar; a military despotism would have been firmly fixed in the colonies; the patriots of Massachusetts would have been doubly despised, the scorn of their enemies, the scorn of their deluded countrymen; the cry of liberty, which they had raised from the shore to the mountains, would have been turned back in a cry of disdain; and the heart of this great people, then beating and almost bursting for freedom, would have been struck cold and dead, and, for aught we can now reason, for ever.

There are those, who object to such a celebration as this, as tending to keep up or to awaken a hostile sentiment toward England. But I do not feel the force of this scruple. In the first place, it was not England, but the English ministerial party of the day, and a small circle in that party, which projected the measures that resulted in our Revolution. The rights of America found steady and powerful asserters in England. Lord Chatham declared to the House of Peers that he was glad America had resisted, and alluding to the fact that he had a son in the British army, he added, "that none of his blood should serve in this detested cause." Nay, even the ministers that imposed the stamp duty the measure which hastened the spirit of America to a crisis, which it might not have reached in a century, Lord Mansfield, the Duke of Grafton, the Earl of Shelburne, Lord Camden, rose, one after another, and asserted in the House of Lords, that they had no share in the measures which were proposed by the very cabinet, of which they were leading members.

But I must go further. Did faithful history compel us to cast on all England united the reproach of those measures, which drove our fathers to arms; and were it, in consequence, the unavoidable effect of these celebrations to revive the feelings of revoluti-

onary times in the bosoms of the aged; to kindle those feelings anew, in the susceptible hearts of the young; it would still be our duty, on every becoming occasion, in the strongest colors, and in the boldest lines we can command, to retrace the picture of the times that tried men's souls. We owe it to our fathers, we owe it to our children. A pacific and friendly feeling towards England is the duty of this nation; but it is not our only duty, it is not our first duty. America owes an earlier and a higher duty to the great and good men, who caused her to be a nation; who, at an expense of treasure, a contempt of peril, a prodigality of blood—the purest and noblest that ever flowed,—of which we can now hardly conceive, vindicated to this continent a place among the nations of the earth. I cannot consent, out of tenderness to the memory of the Gages, the Hutchinsons, the Grenvilles and Norths, the Dartmouths and Hillsboroughs, to cast a veil over the labors and the sacrifices of the Quincys, the Adamses, the Hancocks and the Warrens. I am not willing to give up to the ploughshare the soil wet with our fathers' blood; no! not even to plant the olive of peace in the furrow.

There is not a people on earth so abject, as to think that national courtesy requires them to hush up the tale of the glorious exploits of their fathers and countrymen. France is at peace with Austria and Prussia; but she does not demolish her beautiful bridges, baptized with the name of the battle fields, where Napoleon annihilated their armies; nor tear down the columns, moulten out of the accumulated heaps of their captive artillery. England is at peace with France and Spain, but does she suppress the names of Trafalgar and the Nile; does she overthrow the towers of Blenheim casle, eternal monuments of the disasters of France; does she tear down from the rafters of her chapels, where they have for ages waved in triumph, consecrated to the God of battles, the banners of Cressy and Agincourt?—No; she is wiser; wiser, did I say? she is truer, juster to the memory of her fathers and the spirit of her children. The national character, in some of its most important elements, must be formed, elevated, and strengthened from the materials which history presents. The great objection which has been urged, and urged at the point of the bayonet and at the mouth of the cannon, by the partisans of arbitrary power in Europe, against revolutionary and popular governments, is, that they want a historical basis, which alone, they say, can impart stability and legality to public institutions. But certainly the historical basis is of much greater moment to the spirit, than to the institutions of a people; and for the reason, that the spirit itself of a nation is far more important than its institutions at any moment. Let the spirit be sound and true, and it will sooner or later find or make a remedy for defective institutions. But though the institutions should surpass, in theoretic beauty, the fabled perfection of Utopia or Atlantis, without a free

spirit, the people will be slaves; they will be slaves of the most despicable kind,—pretended freemen.

And how is the spirit of a people to be formed and animated and cheered, but out of the store-house of its historic recollections? Are we to be eternally ringing the changes upon Marathon and Thermopylæ; and going back to read in obscure texts of Greek and Latin of the great exemplars of patriotic virtue? I thank God, that we can find them nearer home, in our own country, on our own soil;—that strains of the noblest sentiment, that ever swelled in the breast of man, are breathing to us out of every page of our country's history, in the native eloquence of our mother tongue; that the colonial and the provincial councils of America, exhibit to us models of the spirit and character, which gave Greece and Rome their name and their praise among the nations. Here we ought to go for our instruction; the lesson is plain, it is clear, it is applicable. When we go to ancient history, we are bewildered with the difference of manners and institutions.

We are willing to pay our tribute of applause to the memory of Leonidas, who fell nobly for his country, in the face of the foe. But when we trace him to his home, we are confounded at the reflection, that the same Spartan heroism to which he sacrificed himself at Thermopylæ, would have led him to tear his only child, if it happened to be a sickly babe—the very object for which all that is kind and good in man rises up to plead—from the bosom of its mother, and carry it out to be eaten by the wolves of Taygetus. We feel a glow of admiration at the heroism displayed at Marathon, by the ten thousand champions of invaded Greece; but we cannot forget that the tenth part of the number were slaves, unchained from the work-shops and door-posts of their masters, to go and fight the battles of freedom. I do not mean that these examples are to destroy the interest with which we read the history of ancient times; they possibly increase that interest, by the singular contrast they exhibit. But they do warn us, if we need the warning, to seek our great practical lessons of patriotism at home; out of the exploits and sacrifices, of which our own country is the theatre; out of the characters of our own fathers. Them we know, the high-souled, natural, unaffected, the citizen heroes. We know what firesides they left for the cheerless camp. We know with what pacific habits they dared the perils of the field. There is no mystery, no romance, no madness, under the name of chivalry, about them. It is all resolute, manly resistance, for conscience' and liberty's sake, not merely an overwhelming power, but of all the force of long-rooted habits, and native love of order and peace.

Above all, their blood calls to us from the soil which we tread; it beats in our veins; it cries to us, not merely in the thrilling words of one of the first victims in this cause,—“My sons, scorn to be slaves;”—but it cries with a still more moving eloquence—

"My sons, forget not your fathers." Fast, oh, too fast, with all our efforts to prevent it, their precious memories are dying away. Notwithstanding our numerous written memorials, much of what is known of those eventful times dwells but in the recollection of a few revered survivors, and with them is rapidly perishing, unrecorded and irretrievable. How many prudent counsels, conceived in perplexed times; how many heart-stirring words, uttered when liberty was treason; how many brave and heroic deeds, performed when the halter, not the laurel, was the promised meed of patriotic daring,—are already lost and forgotten in the graves of their authors. How little do we,—although we have been permitted to hold converse with the venerable remnants of that day,—how little do we know of their dark and anxious hours; of their secret meditations; of the hurried and perilous events of the momentous struggle. And while they are dropping round us like the leaves of autumn, while scarce a week passes that does not call away some member of the veteran ranks, already so sadly thinned, shall we make no effort to hand down the traditions of their day to our children; to pass the torch of liberty, which we received in all the splendour of its first enkindling, bright and flaming to those who stand next us in the line; so that when we shall come to be gathered to the dust where our fathers are laid, we may say to our sons and our grandsons, "If we did not amass, we have not squandered your inheritance of glory?"

Let us then faithfully go back to those all-important days. Let us commemorate the events, with which the momentous revolutionary crisis was brought on; let us gather up the traditions which still exist; let us show the world, that if we are not called to follow the example of our fathers, we are at least not insensible to the worth of their characters; not indifferent to the sacrifices and trials, by which they purchased our prosperity.

Time would fail us to recount the measures by which the way was prepared for the revolution;—the stamp act; its repeal, with the declaration of the right to tax America; the landing of troops in Boston, beneath the batteries of fourteen vessels of war, lying broadside to the town, with springs on their cables, their guns loaded, and matches smoking; the repeated insults, and finally the massacre of the fifth of March, resulting from this military occupation; and the Boston Port-Bill, by which the final catastrophe was hurried on. Nor can we dwell upon the appointment at Salem, on the seventeenth of June 1774, of the delegates to the continental congress; of the formation at Salem, in the following October, of the provincial congress; of the decided measures, which were taken by that noble assembly, at Concord and at Cambridge; of the preparations they made against the worst, by organizing the militia, providing stores, and appointing commanders. All this was done by the close of the year 1774.

At length the memorable year of 1775 arrived. The plunder of

the provincial stores at Medford, and the attempt to seize the cannon at Salem, had produced a highly irritated state of the public mind. The friends of our rights in England made a vigorous effort in the month of March, to avert the tremendous crisis that impended. On the twenty-second of that month, Mr. Burke spoke the last word of conciliation and peace. He spoke it in a tone and with a power befitting the occasion and the man;—he spoke it to the northwest wind. Eight days after, at that season of the year when the prudent New England husbandman repairs the inclosures of his field, for the protection of the fruits of nature's bounty which ere long will cover them, General Gage sent out a party of eleven hundred men to overthrow the stone walls in the neighbourhood of Boston, by way of opening and levelling the arena for the bloody contest he designed to bring on. With the same view, in the months of February and March, his officers were sent in disguise to traverse the country, to make military surveys and sketches of its roads and passes, to obtain accounts of the stores at Concord and Worcester, and to communicate with the small number of disaffected Americans. These disguised officers were here at Concord, on the twentieth of March; and received treacherous or unsuspecting information of the places, where the provincial stores were concealed. I mention this only to show, that our fathers in their arduous contest, had every thing to contend with; secret as well as open foes; treachery in the cabinet, as well as power in the field. But I need not add, that they possessed not only the courage and the resolution, but the vigilance and care, demanded for the crisis. In November 1774, a society had been formed in Boston, principally of the mechanics of that town,—a class of men to whom the revolutionary cause was as deeply indebted, as to any other in America,—for the express purpose of closely watching the movements of the open and secret foes of the country. In the long and dreary nights of a New England winter, they patrolled the streets; and not a movement which concerned the cause, escaped their vigilance. Not a measure of the royal governor, but was in their possession, in a few hours after it was communicated to his confidential officers. Nor was it manly patriotism alone, whose spirit was thus aroused in the cause. The daughters of America were inspired with the same noble temper, that animated their fathers, their husbands, and their brethren. The historian tells us, that the first intimation communicated to the patriots of the impending commencement of hostilities, came from a daughter of liberty, unequally yoked with an enemy of her country's rights.

With all these warnings, and all the vigilance with which the royal troops were watched, none supposed the fatal moment was hurrying so rapidly on. On Saturday, April fifteenth, the Provincial Congress adjourned their session in this place, to meet on

the tenth of May. On the very same day, Saturday the fifteenth of April, the companies of grenadiers and light infantry in Boston, the flower not merely of the royal garrison, but of the British army, were taken off their regular duty, under the pretence of learning a new military exercise. At the midnight following, the boats of the transport ships, which had been previously repaired, were launched, and moored for safety under the sterns of the vessels of war. Not one of those movements,—least of all, that which took place beneath the shades of midnight,—was unobserved by the vigilant sons of liberty. The next morning, Colonel Paul Revere, a very active member of the patriotic society just mentioned, was despatched by Dr. Joseph Warren to John Hancock and Samuel Adams, then at Lexington, whose seizure was threatened by the royal governor. So early did these distinguished patriots receive the intelligence, that preparations for an important movement were on foot. Justly considering, however, that some object besides the seizure of two individuals was probably designed, in the movement of so large a force, they counselled the Committee of Safety to order the distribution into the neighbouring towns, of the stores collected at Concord. Colonel Revere, on his return from this excursion on the sixteenth of April, in order to guard against any accident, which might make it impossible at the last moment to give information from Boston of the departure of the troops, concerted with his friends in Charlestown, that whenever the British forces should embark in their boats to cross into the country, two lanterns should be shown in North Church steeple, and one, should they march out by Roxbury.

Thus was the meditated blow prepared for before it was struck, and we almost smile at the tardy prudence of the British Commander, who, on Tuesday the eighteenth of April, despatched ten serjeants, who were to dine at Cambridge, and at nightfall scatter themselves on the roads from Boston to Concord, to prevent notice of the projected expedition from reaching the country.

At length the momentous hour arrives, as big with consequences to man, as any that ever struck in his history. The darkness of night is still to shroud the rash and fatal measures, with which the liberty of America is hastened on. The highest officers in the British army are as yet ignorant of the nature of the meditated blow. At nine o'clock in the evening of the eighteenth, Lord Percy is sent for by the governor to receive the information of the design. On his way back to his lodgings, he finds the very movements, which had been just communicated to him in confidence by the commander in chief, a subject of conversation in a group of patriotic citizens in the street. He hastened back to General Gage and tells him he is betrayed; and orders are instantly given to permit no American to leave the town. But the order is five minutes too late. Dr. Warren, the President of the

Committee of Safety, though he had returned at nightfall from the meeting at West Cambridge, was already in possession of the whole design; and instantly despatched two messengers to Lexington, Mr. William Dawes, who went out by Roxbury, and Colonel Paul Revere, who crossed to Charlestown. The Colonel received this summons, at ten o'clock on Tuesday night; the lanterns were immediately lighted up in North Church steeple; and in this way, before a man of the soldiery was embarked in the boats, the news of their coming was travelling with the rapidity of light, through the country.*

Having accomplished this precautionary measure, Colonel Revere repaired to the north part of the town, where he constantly kept a boat in readiness, in which he was now rowed by two friends across the river, a little to the eastward of the spot where the Somerset man-of-war was moored, between Boston and Charlestown. It was then young flood, the ship was swinging round upon the tide, and the moon was just rising upon this midnight scene of solemn anticipation. Colonel Revere was safely landed in Charlestown, where his signals had already been observed. He procured a horse from Deacon Larkin for the further pursuit of his errand. That he would not be permitted to accomplish it, without risk of interruption, which was evident from the information he received from Mr. Richard Devens, a member of the Committee of Safety, that on his way from West Cambridge, where the committee sat, he had encountered several British officers, well armed and mounted, going up the road.

At eleven o'clock, Colonel Revere started upon his eventful errand. After passing Charlestown neck, he saw two men on horseback under a tree. On approaching them he perceived them by the light of the moon to be British officers. One of them immediately tried to intercept, and the other to seize him. The colonel instantly turned back toward Charlestown, and then struck into the Medford road. The officer in pursuit of him, endeavouring to cut him off, plunged into a clay-pond, in the corner between the two roads, and the Colonel escaped. He accordingly pursued his way to Medford, awoke the captain of the minute men there, and giving the alarm at every house on the road, passed on through West Cambridge to Lexington. There he delivered his message to Messrs. Hancock and Adams,† and there also he was shortly after joined by Mr. William Dawes, the messenger who had gone out by Roxbury.

After staying a short time at Lexington, Messrs. Revere and Dawes, at about one o'clock of the morning of the nineteenth of April, started for Concord, to communicate the intelligence there. They were soon overtaken on the way by Dr. Samuel Prescott of Concord, who joined them in giving the alarm at every house on the

* See note A.

† See note B

road. About half way from Lexington to Concord, while Dawes and Prescott were alarming a house on the road, Revere, being about one hundred rods in advance, saw two officers in the road, of the same appearance as those he had escaped in Charlestown. He called to his companions, to assist him in forcing his way through them, but was himself instantly surrounded by four officers. These officers had previously thrown down the wall into an adjoining field, and the Americans, prevented from forcing their way onward, passed into the field. Dr. Prescott, although the reins of his horse had been cut in the struggle with the officers, succeeded by leaping a stone wall, in making his escape from the field and reaching Concord. Revere aimed at a wood, but was there encountered by six more officers, and was with his companion made prisoner. The British officers, who had already seized three other Americans, having learned from their prisoners that the whole country was alarmed, thought it best for their own safety to hasten back, taking their prisoners with them. Near Lexington meeting-house, on their return, the British officers heard the militia, who were on parade, firing a volley of guns. Terrified at this, they compelled Revere to give up his horse, and then pushing forward at full gallop, escaped down the road.

The morning was now advanced to about four o'clock, nor was it then known at Lexington that the British was so near at hand. Colonel Revere again sought Messrs. Hancock and Adams at the house of the Reverend Mr. Clark, and it was thought, expedient by their friends, who had kept watch there during the night, that these eminent patriots should remove toward Woburn. Having attended them to a house, on the Woburn road, where they proposed to stop, Colonel Revere returned to Lexington to watch the progress of events. He soon met a person at full gallop, who informed him that the British troops were coming up the road. Hastening now to the public house, to secure some papers of Messrs. Hancock and Adams, Colonel Revere saw the British troops pressing forward in full array.

It was now seven hours, since these troops were put in motion. They were mustered at ten o'clock of the night preceding, on the Boston Common, and embarked, to the number of eight hundred grenadiers and light infantry, in the boats of the British squadron. They landed at Phipps's Farm, a little to the south of Lechmere's Point, and on disembarking, a day's provision was dealt out to them. Pursuing the path across the marshes, they emerged into the old Charlestown and West Cambridge road.

And here let us pause a moment in the narration, to ask, who are the men and what is the cause? It is an army of Frenchmen and Canadians, who in earlier days had often run the line between them and us, with havock and fire, and who have now

come to pay back the debt of defeat and subjugation? Or is it their ancient ally of the woods, the stealthy savage,—borne in his light canoe, with muffled oars, over the midnight waters,—creeping like the felon wolf through our villages, that he may start up at dawn, to wage a war of surprise, of plunder, and of horror against the slumbering cradle and the defenceless fireside? O no! It is the disciplined armies, of a brave, a christian a kindred people; led by gallant officers, the choice sons of England; and they are going to seize, and secure for the halter, men whose crime is that they have dared to utter in the English tongue, on this side of the ocean, the principles which gave, and give England her standing among the nations; they are going to plunge their swords in the breasts of men, who fifteen years before, on the plains of Abraham, stood, and fought and conquered by their side. But they go not unobserved; the tidings of their approach are travelling before them; the faithful messengers have aroused the citizens from their slumbers, alarm guns are answering to each other, and spreading the news from village to village; the tocsin is heard, at this unnatural hour, from steeples, that never before rung with any other summons than that of the gospel of peace; the sacred tranquillity of the hour is startled with all the sounds of preparation,—of gathering bands, and resolute though unorganized resistance.

The Committee of Safety, as has been observed, had set, the preceding day, at West Cambridge; and three of its respected members, Gerry, Lee, and Orne, had retired to sleep, in the public house, where the session of the committee was held. So difficult was it notwithstanding all that had passed, to realize that a state of things could exist, between England and America, in which American citizens should be liable to be torn from their beds by an armed force at midnight, that the members of the Committee of safety, though forewarned of the approach of the British troops, did not even think it necessary to retire from their lodgings. On the contrary, they rose from their beds and went to their windows to gaze on the unwonted sight, the midnight march of armies through the peaceful hamlets of New England. Half the column had already passed, when a flank guard was promptly detached to search the public house, no doubt in the design of arresting the members of the Committee of Safety, who might be there. It was only at this last critical moment, that Gerry and his friends bethought themselves of flight, and without time even to clothe themselves, escaped naked into the fields.

By this time Colonel Smith, who commanded the expedition, appears to have been alarmed at the indications of a general rising throughout the country. The light infantry companies were now detached and placed under the command of Major Pitcairne, for

the purpose of hastening forward, to secure the bridges at Concord; and thus cut off the communication between this place and the towns north and west of it. Before these companies could reach Lexington, the officers already mentioned, who had arrested Colonel Revere, joined their advancing countrymen, and reported that five hundred men were drawn up in Lexington, to resist the king's troops. On receiving this exaggerated account, the British light infantry was halted, to give time for the grenadiers to come up, that the whole together might move forward to the work of death.

The company assembled at Lexington Green, which the British officers, in their report, had swelled to five hundred, consisted of sixty or seventy of the militia of the place. Information had been received about nightfall, both by private means and by communications from the Committee of Safety, that a strong party of officers had seen seen on the road, directing their course toward Lexington. In consequence of this intelligence, a body of about thirty of the militia, well armed, assembled early in the evening; a guard of eight men under Colonel William Munroe, then a sergeant in the company, was stationed at Mr. Clark's: and three men were sent off to give the alarm at Concord. These three messengers were however stopped on their way, as has been mentioned, by the British officers, who had already passed onward. One of their number, Elijah Sanderson, has lately died at Salem at an advanced age. A little after midnight, as has been observed, Messrs. Revere and Dawes arrived with the certain information, that a very large body of the royal troops was in motion. The alarm was now generally given to the inhabitants of Lexington, messengers were sent down the road to ascertain the movements of the troops, and the militia company under Captain John Parker appeared on the green to the number of one hundred and thirty. The roll was duly called at this perilous midnight muster and some answered to their names for the last time on earth. The company was now ordered to load with powder and ball, and awaited in anxious expectation the return of those who had been sent to reconnoitre the enemy. One of them, in consequence of some misinformation, returned and reported that there was no appearance of troops on the road from Boston. Under this harassing uncertainty and contradiction, the militia were dismissed to await the return of the other express and with orders to be in readiness at the beat of the drum. One of these messengers was made prisoner by the British, whose march was so cautious, that they remained undiscovered till within a mile and a half of Lexington meetinghouse, and time was scarce left for the last messenger to return with the tidings of their approach.

The new alarm was now given: the bell rings, alarm guns are fired, the drum beats to arms. Some of the militia had gone home, when dismissed; but the greater part were in the neigh-

bouring houses, and instantly obeyed the summons. Sixty or seventy appeared on the green and were drawn up in double ranks. At this moment the British column of eight hundred gleaming bayonets appears, headed by their mounted commanders, their banners flying and drums beating a charge. To engage them with a handful of militia of course was madness,—to fly at the sight of them, they disdained. The British troops rush furiously on; their commanders, with mingled threats and execrations, bid the Americans lay down their arms and disperse, and their own troops to fire. A moment's delay, as of compunction follows. The order with vehement imprecations is repeated, and they fire. No one falls, and the band of self-devoted heroes, most of whom had never seen such a body of troops before, stand firm in the front of an army, outnumbering them ten to one. Another volley succeeds; the killed and wounded drop, and it was not till they had returned the fire of the overwhelming force, that the militia were driven from the field. A scattered fire now succeeded on both sides while the Americans remained in sight; and the British troops were then drawn up on the green to fire a volley and give a shout in honour of the victory.*

While these incidents were taking place, and every moment then came charged with events which were to give a character to centuries, Hancock and Adams, though removed by their friends from the immediate vicinity of the force sent to apprehend them, were apprized, too faithfully, that the work of death was begun. The heavy and quick repeated volleys told them a tale, that needed no exposition,—which proclaimed that Great Britain had renounced that strong invisible tie which bound the descendants of England to the land of their fathers, and had appealed to the right of the strongest. The inevitable train of consequences burst in prophetic fulness upon their minds; and the patriot Adams, forgetting the scenes of tribulation through which America must pass to realize the prospect, and heedless that the ministers of vengeance, in overwhelming strength, were in close pursuit of his own life, uttered that memorable exclamation, than which nothing more generous can be found in the records of Grecian or Roman heroism,—“ O, what a glorious morning is this !”

Elated with its success, the British army took up its march toward concord. The intelligence of the projected expedition had been communicated to this town by Dr. Samuel Prescott, in the manner already described; and from Concord had travelled onward in every direction. The interval was employed in removing a portion of the public stores to the neighbouring towns, while the aged and infirm, the women and children, sought refuge in the surrounding woods. About seven o'clock in the morning, the glittering arms of the British column were seen ad-

See Note C.

vancing on the Lincoln road. A body of militia from one hundred and fifty to two hundred men, who had taken post for observation on the heights above the entrance to the town, retire at the approach of the army of the enemy, first to the hill a little farther north, and then beyond the bridge. The British troops press forward in the town, and are drawn up in front of the courthouse. Parties are then ordered out to the various spots where the public stores and arms were supposed to be deposited. Much had been removed to places of safety, and something was saved by the prompt and innocent artifices of individuals. The destruction of property and of arms was hasty and incomplete, and considered as the object of an enterprise of such fatal consequences, it stands in shocking contrast with the waste of blood by which it was effected.

I am relating events, which, though they can never be repeated more frequently than they deserve, are yet familiar to all who hear me. I need not therefore attempt, nor would it be practicable did I attempt it, to recall the numerous interesting occurrences of that ever memorable day. The reasonable limits of a public discourse must confine us to a selection of the more prominent incidents.

It was the first care of the British commander to cut off the approach of the Americans from the neighbouring towns, by destroying or occupying the bridges. A party was immediately sent to the south bridge and tore it up. A force of six companies, under Captains Parsons and Lowrie, was sent to the north bridge. Three companies under Captain Lowrie were left to guard it, and three under Captain Parsons proceeded to Colonel Barrett's house, in search of provincial stores. While they were engaged on that errand, the militia of Concord, joined by their brave brethren from the neighbouring towns, gathered on the hill opposite the north bridge, under the command of Colonel Robinson and Major Buttrick. The British companies at the bridge were now apparently bewildered with the perils of their situation, and began to tear up the planks of the bridge; not remembering that this would expose their own party, then at Colonel Barrett's to certain and entire destruction. The Americans, on the other hand, resolved to keep open the communication with the town, and perceiving the attempt which was made to destroy the bridge, were immediately put in motion, with orders not to give the first fire. They draw near to the bridge, the Acton company in front, led on by the gallant Davis. Three alarm guns were fired into the water, by the British, without arresting the march of our citizens. The signal for a general discharge is then made;—a British soldier steps from the ranks and fires at Major Buttrick. The ball passed between his arm and his side, and slightly wounded Mr. Luther Blanchard, who stood near him. A volley instantly followed, and Captain Davis was shot through

the heart, gallantly marching at the head of the acton militia against the choice troops of the British line. A private of his company, Mr. Hosmer of Acton, also fell at his side. A general action now ensued, which terminated in the retreat of the British party, after the loss of several killed and wounded, toward the centre of the town, followed by the brave band who had driven them from their post. The advance party of British at Colonel Barrett's was thus left to its fate; and nothing would have been more easy than to effect its entire destruction. But the idea of a declared war had yet scarcely forced itself, with all its consequences, into the minds of our countrymen; and these advanced companies were allowed to return unmolested to their main band.

It was now twelve hours since the first alarm had been given, the evening before, of the meditated expedition. The swift watches of that eventful night had scattered the tidings far and wide; and widely as they spread, the people rose in their strength. The genius of America, on this the morning of her emancipation, had sounded her horn over the plains and upon the mountains; and the indignant yeomanry of the land, armed with the weapons which had done service in their fathers' hands, poured to the spot where this new and strange tragedy was acting. The old New England drums, that had beat at Louisburgh, at Quebec, at Martinique, at the Havana, were now sounding on all the roads to Concord. There were officers in the British line, that knew the sound;—they had heard it, in the deadly breach, beneath the black, deepthroated engines of the French and Spanish castles. With the British it was a question no longer of protracted hostility, nor even of halting long enough to rest their exhausted troops, after a weary night's march, and all the labor, confusion, and distress of the day's efforts. Their dead were hastily buried in the public square; their wounded placed in the vehicles which the town afforded; and a flight commenced, to which the annals of British warfare will hardly afford a parallel. On all the neighbouring hills were multitudes from the surrounding country, of the unarmed and infirm, of women and of children, who had fled from the terrors and the perils of the plunder and conflagration of their homes; or were collected, with fearful curiosity, to mark the progress of this storm of war. The panic fears of a calamitous flight, on the part of the British, transformed this inoffensive, timid throng into a threatening array of armed men; and there was too much reason for the misconception. Every height of ground, within reach of the line of march covered with the indignant avengers of their slaughtered brethren. The British light companies were sent out to great distances as flanking parties; but who was to flank the flankers? Every patch of trees, every rock, every stream of water, every building, every stone wall, was *lined* (I use the

words of a British officer in the battle), was lined with an unremitting fire. Every cross-road opened a new avenue to the assailants. Through one of these the gallant Brooks lead up the minute men of Reading. At another defile, they were encountered by the Lexington militia, under Captain Parker, who, undismayed at the loss of more than a tenth of their number in killed and wounded in the morning, had returned to the conflict. At first the contest was kept up by the British, with all the skill and valour of veteran troops. To a military eye it was not an unequal contest. The commander was not, or ought not to have been, taken by surprise. Eight hundred picked men, grenadiers and light infantry, from the English army, were no doubt considered by General Gage, a very ample detachment to march eighteen or twenty miles through an open country; and a very fair match for all the resistance which could be made by unprepared husbandmen, without concert, discipline, or leaders. With about ten times their number, the Grecian commander had forced a march out of the wrecks of a field of battle and defeat, through the barbarous nations of Asia, for thirteen long months, from the plains of Babylon to the Black sea, through forests, defiles and deserts, which the foot of civilized man had never trod. It was the American cause,—its holy foundation in truth and right, its strength and life in the hearts of the people, that converted what would naturally have been the undisturbed march of a strong, well provided army into a rabble rout of terror and death. It was this, which sowed the fields of our pacific villages with dragon's teeth; which nerved the arm of age; called the ministers and servants of the church into the hot fire; and even filled with strange passion and manly strength the heart and the arm of the stripling. A British historian, to paint the terrific aspect of things that presented itself to his countrymen, declares that the rebels swarmed upon the hills, as if they dropped from the clouds. Before the flying troops had reached Lexington, their rout was entire. Some of the officers had been made prisoners, some had been killed, and several wounded, and among them the commander in chief, Colonel Smith. The ordinary means of preserving discipline failed; the wounded, in chaises and waggons, pressed to the front and obstructed the road; wherever the flanking parties, from the nature of the ground, were forced to come in, the line of march was crowded and broken; the ammunition began to fail; and at length the entire body was on a full run. "We attempted," says a British officer already quoted, "to stop the men and form them two deep, but to no purpose; the confusion rather increased than lessened." An English historian says, the British soldiers were driven before the Americans like sheep; till, by a last desperate effort, the officers succeeded in forcing their way to the front, "when they presented their swords and bayonets against the breasts of their own men, and told them if they advanced they

should die." Upon this they began to form, under what the same British officer pronounces "a very heavy fire," which must soon have led to the destruction or capture of the whole corps. At this critical moment, it pleased Providence that a reinforcement should arrive. Colonel Smith had sent back a messenger from Lexington to apprise General Gage of the check he had there received, and of the alarm which was running through the country. Three regiments of infantry and two divisions of marines with two fieldpieces, under the command of Brigadier General Lord-Percy, were accordingly detached. They marched out of Boston, through Roxbury and Cambridge*, and came up with the flying party, in the hour of their extreme peril. While their fieldpieces kept the Americans at bay; the reinforcement drew up in a hollow square, into which, says the British historian, they received the exhausted fugitives, "who lay down on the ground, with their tongues hanging from their mouths, like dogs after a chase."

A half an hour was given to rest; the march was then resumed; and under cover of the field-pieces, every house in Lexington, and on the road, downwards, was plundered and set on fire. Though the flames in most cases were speedily extinguished, several houses were destroyed. Notwithstanding the attention of a great part of the Americans was thus drawn off; and although the British force was now more than doubled, their retreat still wore the aspect of a flight. The Americans filled the heights that overhung the road, and at every defile, the struggle was sharp and bloody. At West Cambridge, the gallant Warren, never distant when danger was to be braved, appeared in the field, and a musket ball soon cut off a lock of hair from his temple. General Heath was with him, nor does there appear till this moment, to have been any effective command among the American forces.

Below West Cambridge, the militia from Dorchester, Roxbury, and Brookline came up. The British fieldpieces began to lose their terror. A sharp skirmish followed, and many fell on both sides. Indignation and outraged humanity struggled on the one hand, veteran discipline and desperation on the other; and the contest, in more than one instance, was man to man, and bayonet to bayonet.

The British officers had been compelled to descend from their horses to escape the certain destruction, which attended their exposed situation. The wounded, to the number of two hundred, now presented the most distressing and constantly increasing obstruction to the progress of the march. Near one hundred brave men had fallen in this disastrous flight; a considerable number had been made prisoners; a round or two of ammunition only remained; and it was not till late in the evening, nearly twenty-four hours from the time when the first detachment was put in

* See note D.

motion, that the exhausted remnant reached the heights of Charlestown. The boats of the vessels of war were immediately employed to transport the wounded; the remaining British troops in Boston came over to Charlestown to protect their weary countrymen during the night; and before the close of the next day the royal army was formally besieged in Boston.

Such, fellow citizens, imperfectly sketched in their outline, were the events of the day we celebrate; a day as important as any recorded in the history of man. Such were the first of a series of actions, that have extensively changed and are every day more extensively changing the condition and prospects of the human race. Such were the perils, such the sufferings of our fathers, which it has pleased Providence to crown with a blessing beyond the most sanguine hopes of those who then ventured their all in the cause.

It is a proud anniversary for our neighbourhood. We have cause for honest complacency, that when the distant citizen of our own republic, when the stranger from foreign lands, inquires for the spots where the noble blood of the revolution began to flow, where the first battle of that great and glorious contest was fought, he is guided through the villages of Middlesex, to the plains of Lexington and Concord. It is a commemoration of our soil, to which ages as they pass, will add dignity and interest; till the names of Lexington and Concord, in the annals of freedom, will stand by the side of the most honourable names in Roman or Grecian story.

It was one of those great days, one of those elemental occasions in the world's affairs, when the people rise, and act for themselves. Some organization and preparation had been made; but from the nature of the case, with scarce any effect on the events of that day. It may be doubted, whether there was an efficient order given the whole day to any body of men, as large as a regiment. It was the people, in their first capacity, as citizens and as freemen, starting from their beds at midnight, from their firesides, and from their fields, to take their own cause into their own hands. Such a spectacle is the height of the moral sublime; when the want of every thing is fully made up by the spirit of the cause; and the soul within stands in place of discipline, organization, resources. In the prodigious efforts of a veteran army, beneath the dazzling splendour of their array, there is something revolting to the reflective mind. The ranks are filled with the desperate, the mercenary, the depraved; an iron slavery, by the name of subordination, merges the free will of one hundred thousand men, in the unqualified despotism of one; the humanity, mercy and remorse, which scarce ever desert the individual bosom, are sounds without a meaning to that fearful, ravenous, irrational monster of prey, a mercenary army. It is hard to say who are most to be commiserated, the wretched people on whom it is let loose or the still more wretched people whose substance has been

sucked out, to nourish it into strength and fury. But in the efforts of the people struggling for their rights, moving not in organized disciplined masses, but in their spontaneous action, man for man, and heart for heart,—though I like not war nor any of its works,—there is something glorious. They can then move forward without orders, act, together without combination, and brave the flaming lines of battle, without entrenchments to cover, or walls to shield them. No dissolute camp has worn off from the feelings of the youthful soldier the freshness of that home, where his mother and his sisters sit waiting, with tearful eyes and teaching hearts, to hear good news from the wars; no long service in the ranks of a conqueror has turned the veteran's heart into marble; their valor springs not from recklessness, from habit, from indifference to the preservation of a life, knit by no pledges to the life of others. But in the strength and spirit of the cause alone they act, they contend, they bleed. In this, they conquer. The people always conquer. They always must conquer. Armies may be defeated; kings may be overthrown, and new dynasties imposed by foreign arms on an ignorant and slavish race, that care not in what language the covenant of their subjection runs, nor in whose name the deed of their barter and sale is made out. But the people never invade; and when they rise against the invader, are never subdued. If they are driven from the plains, they fly to the mountains. Steep rocks and everlasting hills are their castles; the tangled, pathless thicket their palisado, and nature,—God, is their ally. Now he overwhelms the hosts of their enemies beneath his drifting mountains of sand; now he buries them beneath a falling atmosphere of polar snows; he lets loose his tempests on their fleets: he puts a folly into their counsels, a madness into the hearts of their leaders; and never gave and never will give a full and final triumph over a virtuous, gallant people, resolved to be free.

There is another reflection, which deserves to be made, while we dwell on the events of the nineteenth of April. It was the work of the *country*. The *cities* of America, particularly the metropolis of our own state, bore their part nobly in the revolutionary contest. It is not unjust to say, that much of the spirit which animated America, particularly before the great appeal to arms, grew out of the comparison of opinions and concert of feeling, which might not have existed, without the convenience of assembling which our large towns afford. But if we must look to the city for a part of the impulse, we must look to the country at large, for the heart to be moved,—for the strength and vigor to persevere in the motion. It was the great happiness of America, that her cities were no larger, no more numerous, no nearer to each other; that the strength, the intelligence, the spirit of the people were diffused over plains, and encamped on the hills.

In most of the old and powerful states of Europe, the na-

tion is identified with the capital, and the capital with the court. France must fall with the citizens of Paris, and the citizens of Paris with a few courtiers, cabinet ministers, and princes. No doubt the English ministry thought that by holding Boston, they held New England; that the country was conquered in advance, by the military occupation of the great towns. They did not know that every town and village in America had discussed the great questions at issue for itself; and in its town-meetings, and committees of correspondence and safety, had come to the resolution, that America must not be taxed by England. The English government did not understand,—we hardly understood, ourselves, till we saw it in action,—the operation of a state of society, where every man is or may be a freeholder, a voter for every elective office, a candidate for every one; where the means of a good education are universally accessible; where the artificial distinctions of society are known but in a slight degree; where glaring contrasts of condition are rarely met with; where few are raised by the extreme of wealth above their fellow-men, and fewer sunk by the extreme of poverty beneath it. The English ministry had not reasoned upon the natural growth of such a soil; that it could not permanently bear either a colonial, or a monarchical government; that the only true and native growth of such a soil was a perfect independence and an intelligent republicanism. Independence, because such a country must disdain to go over the water to find another to protect it; Republicanism, because the people of such a country must disdain to look up for protection to any one class among themselves. The entire action of these principles was unfolded to the world on the nineteenth of April, 1775. Without waiting to take an impulse from any thing but their own breasts, and in defiance of the whole exerted powers of the British empire, the yeomanry of the country rose as a man, and set their lives on this dear stake of liberty.

When we look back on the condition in which America stood on the 19th of April, 1775; and compare it with that in which it stands this day, we can find no language of gratitude with which to do justice to those, who took the lead in the revolutionary cause. The best gratitude, the best thanks, will be an imitation of their example. It would be an exceedingly narrow view of the part assigned to this country on the stage of the nations, to consider the erection of an independant and representative government as the only political object at which the revolution aimed, and the only political improvement which our duty requires. These are two all-important steps, indeed, in the work of meliorating the state of society. The first gives the people of America the sovereign power of carrying its will into execution; the second furnishes an equitable and convenient mode of ascertaining what the will of the people is. But shall we stop here? shall we make no use of these two engines, by whose combined action every individual enjoys a share in the sovereign power of this

great nation? Most of the civil and social institutions which still exist in the country, were brought by our fathers from the old world, and are strongly impressed with the character of the state of society which there prevails. Under the influence of necessity, these institutions have been partially reformed, and rendered, to a certain degree, harmonious with the nature of a popular government. But much remains to be done, to make the work of revolution complete. The whole business of public instruction, of the administration of justice, of military defence in time of peace, needs to be revolutionized: that is, to be revised and made entirely conformable to the interests and wishes of the great mass. It is time in short, to act upon the maxim in which the wisdom of all ages is wrapped up, **THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE IS THE VOICE OF GOD.** Apart from inspired revelation, there is no way, in which the will of heaven is made known, but by the sound, collective sense of the majority of men. It is given to no privileged family, to no hereditary ruler: it is given to no commanding genius; it is given to no learned sage; it is given to no circle of men to pronounce this sacred voice. It must be uttered by the people, in their own capacity; and whosoever it is uttered, I say not it ought to be, but that it will be obeyed.

But it is time to relieve your patience. I need not labor to impress you with a sense of the duty, which devolves on those, whose sires achieved the ever memorable exploits of this day. The lesson, I know, has not been lost upon you. Nowhere have the spirit and principles of the revolution preserved themselves in greater purity; nowhere have the institutions, to which the revolution led, been more firmly cherished. The toils and sufferings of that day were shared by a glorious band of patriots, whose name was your boast while living; whose memory you will never cease to cherish. The day we commemorate called the noble farmer of Middlesex—the heroic Prescott—to the field, and impelled him not to accept, but to solicit the post of honor and danger, on the 17th of June:—noble I call him, for when did coronet or diadem ever confer distinction, like the glory which rests on that man's name. In the perils of this day, the venerable Gerry bore his part. This was the day, which called the lamented Brooks and Eustis to their country's service; which enlisted them, blooming in the freshness and beauty of youth, in that sacred cause, to which the strength of their manhood and the grey hairs of their age were devoted. The soil which holds their honored dust shall never be unworthy of them.

What pride did you not justly feel in that soil, when you lately welcomed the nation's guest—the venerable champion of America—to the spot, where the first note of struggling freedom was uttered, which sounded across the Atlantic, and drew him from all the delights of life, to enlist in our cause. Here, you could tell him, our fathers fought and fell, before they knew whether

another arm would be raised to second them.—No Washington had appeared to lead, no Lafayette had hastened to assist, no charter of independence had yet breathed the breath of life into the cause, when the 19th of April called our fathers to the field.

What remains, then but to guard the precious birthright of our liberties; to draw from the soil which we inhabit, a consistency in the principles so nobly vindicated, so sacredly sealed thereon. It shall never be said, while distant regions, wheresoever the temples of freedom are reared, are sending back their hearts to the plains of Lexington and Concord, for their brightest and purest examples of patriotic daring, that we whose lives are cast on these favoured spots can become indifferent to the exhortation, which breathes to us from every sod of the valley. Those principles, which others may adopt on the colder ground of their reason and their truth, we are bound to support by the dearest and deepest feelings. Wheresoever the torch of liberty shall expire, wheresoever the manly simplicity of our land shall perish beneath the poison of luxury, wheresoever the cause which called our fathers this day to arms, and the principles which sustained their hearts in that stern encounter, may be deserted or betrayed,—it shall not, fellow citizens it shall not be, on the soil which was moistened with their blood. The names of Marathon and Thermopalaæ, after ages of subjection, still nerve the arm of the Grecian patriot; and should the foot of a tyrant, or of a slave, approach these venerated spots, the noble hearts that bled at Lexington and Concord, “all dust as they are*,” would beat beneath the sod with indignation.

Honor, this day, to the venerable survivors of that momentous day, which tried men's souls. Great is the happiness they are permitted to enjoy, in uniting, within the compass of their own experience, the doubtful struggles and the full blown prosperity of our happy land. May they share the welfare they witness around them; it is the work of their hands, the fruit of their toils, the price of their lives freely hazarded that their children might live free. Bravely they dared; patiently, aye more than patiently,—heroically, piously, they suffered; largely, richly, may they enjoy. Most of their companions are already departed; let us renew our tribute of respect this day to their honored memory. Numbers present will recollect the affecting solemnities, with which you accompanied to his last home, the brave, the lamented Buttrick. With trailing banners, and mournful music, and all the touching ensigns of military sorrow, you followed the bier of the fallen soldier, over the ground where he led the determined band of patriots on the morn of the revolution.

* Bossuet; *Oraison funèbre de la Reine d' Angleterre.*

But chiefly to those who fell ; to those who stood in the breach, at the breaking of that day of blood at Lexington ; to those who joined in battle and died honorably, facing the foe at Concord ; to those who fell in the gallant pursuit of the flying enemy ;—let us this day pay a tribute of grateful admiration. The old and the young ; the grey-haired veteran, the stripling in the flower of youth ; husbands, fathers, brethren, sons ; they stood side by side, and fell together, like the beauty of Israel on their high places.

We have founded this day, a monument to their memory. When the hands that rear it are motionless, when the feeble voice is silent, which speaks our father's praise, the engraved stone shall bear witness to other ages, of our gratitude and their worth. And ages still farther on, when the monument itself, like those who build it, shall have crumbled to dust, the happy aspect of the land which our fathers redeemed, the liberty they achieved, the institutions they founded shall remain one common, eternal monument to their precious memory.

NOTES.

Note A, page 20.

THAT the lanterns were observed in Charlestown, we are informed by Colonel Revere, in the interesting communication in the Collection of the Historical Society, from which this part of the narrative is chiefly taken. A tradition by private channels has descended, that these lanterns in the North Church were quickly noticed by the officers of the British army, on duty on the evening of the 18th. To prevent the alarm being communicated by these signals into the country, the British officers, who had noticed them, hastened to the church to extinguish them. Their steps were heard on the stairs in the tower of the church, by the sexton, who had lighted the lanterns. To escape discovery he himself extinguished the lanterns, and passing by the officers on the stairs, concealed himself in the vaults of the church. He was, a day or two after, arrested, while discharging the duties of his office at a funeral, tried, and condemned to death ; but respite on a threat of retaliation from Gen. Washington, and finally exchanged. This anecdote was related to me, with many circumstances of particularity, by one who had often heard from the sexton himself.

Note B, page 21.

The manner in which Colonel Revere was received at Lexing-

ton, which is not related in his own letter, will appear from the deposition of Colonel William Munroe, which, with several other similar interesting documents, forms a part of the Appendix to the pamphlet alluded to in the next note.

"About midnight, Colonel Paul Revere rode up and requested admittance. I told him the family had just retired, and requested they might not be disturbed by any noise about the house. 'Noise!' said he, 'you'll have noise enough before long. The regulars are coming out.' We then permitted him to pass." p. 33.

Note C, page 30.

It will be perceived that, in drawing up the account of the transactions at Lexington, reference has been had to the testimony contained in the pamphlet lately published, entitled "History of the Battle at Lexington, on the morning of the 19th of April, 1775. By Elias Phinney." While in this pamphlet several interesting facts are added, on the strength of the depositions of surviving actors in the scene, to the accounts previously existing: there is nothing, perhaps, in them, which may not be reconciled with those previously existing accounts; if due allowance be made for the sole object for which the latter were originally published—to show that the British were the aggressors; for the hurry and confusion of the moment and for the different aspect of the scene as witnessed by different persons, from different points of view. It has, however, been my aim not to pronounce on questions in controversy; but to state the impression left on my own mind after an attentive examination of all the evidence.

Note D, page 39.

An interesting anecdote relative to this march of Lord Percy has been communicated to me, by a veteran of the Revolution, who bore his part in the events of the day. Intelligence having been promptly received of Lord Perry being detached, the Selectmen of Cambridge, by order of the Committee of Safety, caused the planks of the Old Bridge to be taken up. Had this been effectually done, it would have arrested the progress of Lord Percy. But the planks, though all taken up, instead of being thrown into the river or removed to a distance, were piled up on the causeway, at the Cambridge end of the bridge. But little time was therefore lost by Lord Percy, in sending over men upon the string pieces of the bridge, who replaced the planks, so as to admit the passage of the troops. This was, however, so hastily and insecurely done, that when a convoy of provision waggons, with a sergeant's guard, which had followed in the rear of the reinforcement, reached the bridge, the planks were found to be too loosely laid to admit a safe passage; and a good deal of time was consumed in adjusting them. The convoy at length passed; but after such a delay, that Lord Percy's army was out of sight. The officer who commanded the convoy was unacquainted with the

roads, and was misdirected by the inhabitants at Cambridge. Having at last, after much lost time, been put into the right road, the body of troops under Lord Percy was so far advanced, as to afford the convoy no protection. A plan was accordingly laid and executed by the citizens of West Cambridge (then Menotomy) to arrest this convoy. The alarm-list, or body of exempts, under Captain Frost, by whom this exploit was effected, acted under the direction of a negro, who had served in the French war; and who, on this occasion, displayed the utmost skill and spirit. The history of Gordon, and the other accounts which follow him, attribute the capture of the convoy to the Rev. Dr. Payson of Chelsea. Those who have farther information alone can judge between the two accounts. The Rev. Mr. Thaxter, of Edgartown, in a letter lately published in the United States Literary Gazette, has ascribed the same exploit to the Rev. Edward Brooks of Medford. Mr. Brooks early hastened to the field as a volunteer that day; and is said to have preserved the life of Lieut. Gould of the 18th regiment, who was made prisoner at Concord Bridge: but there is, I believe, no ground for ascribing to him the conduct of the affair in question.

NOTICE FROM DORCHESTER GAOL.

THE "miscellaneous extracts" which filled three pages of the last No. never formed any part of my scrap book; for I keep none, but that which I always carry about me, like Simonides. There was a little fault in the printer: for arrangement might have brought in the Review of two publications on the Common Law, by Mr. Sampson of New-York, which I intended to print before Everett's speech. I wished to finish my exposure of secret associations in that No. and had given directions that neither of these articles could be omitted. It often happens, that, with matter enough for two Nos., it is difficult so to divide it as to have complete pieces in each. My distance from the press prevents all remedy of this evil, or the preparation of short pieces to fill a vacancy; and I am very unwilling to leave such a preparation to others, as was incidently and unexpectedly though of necessity, the case last week. Arrangements are in hand for the better filling of "The Republican;" and I hope by another year, to see it on an average

contain one third more than its present matter, and, if possible, more interesting.

The Bishop's article on prisons, in the above mentioned extracts was very good for the time in which it was written but Gaols are now very unlike what they then were. In this Gaol, though there are often disagreeable smells, from numbers and other occasions, there is more general cleanliness enforced, than is found ordinarily in the dwellings of our labourers and small tradespeople: and more there should be, if I were master of the Gaol. There should be no idle prisoners. Work or learning voluntarily or enforced, should be the characteristic of a Gaol. By the bye—Mrs. Wright offers herself as a candidate for the Matrons or office of this Gaol, lately vacant, if the Visiting Magistrates will allow her to spend her evenings in conversation with or attentions to me.

In the way of publishing and reprints we thus proceed ;—

Mrs. Carlile's Trial at sixpence is reprinted, with additions and corrections. The following is its dedication.
“ To the memory of Robert Steuart, Marquis of Londonderry, Viscount Castlereagh, &c., who eventually did that for himself, which millions wished some noble mind would do for him—*cut his throat*, this pamphlet is inscribed; as, to him, the libel and defence more particularly alluded, he being, at the time, the most prominent of many English, Scotch and Irish Tyrants.—It is also inscribed to the British and Irish Public, as one of the most important political and moral documents in print by Richard Carlile.

The Trial of James Watson for the publication of Palmer's Principles of Nature is now first published as a pamphlet with the defence complete at sixpence.

The Trial of William Tunbridge is reprinted exclusive of all the quotations or readings of the works of Elihu Palmer. Any person who has an incomplete copy of the Nos. of the first edition may have it completed.

The whole of the trials of the persons prosecuted for selling in my shops are ready for collection into one volume to sell at 12s. in bds. They, who wish to bind the collection may have a general title, preface and contents.

We have also published a little poem, at sixpence, entitled “The Child of Nature,” by Ephraim Smooth. We say, that *it is the best little poem in existence*, or that has been known to exist; but rather for its doctrine than its poetry, Individually, I do not profess to be a critic or judge of

poetry ; therefore, I make no extracts for criticism. I can only answer for the doctrine.

The Moralist and all things in due season, or before the end of the world. Our delays are never the result of idleness.

THE GOD FOR A SHILLING.

I AM sorely pressed to get a match print of the Christian's Devil, as a companion, or to make a pair with the God, Mr. Holmes of Sheffield has sent me the following copy : whether he has put it into his shop window, he does not say ; but I suppose he has. I think of getting a *godling* engraved, to bind with an octavo bible. It will be the best commentary extant.

R. C.

NOTICE.

THE Proprietors of this shop will give the sum of Five Guineas to any Christian who will catch and bring to them the DEVIL that a design may be taken, and his likeness engraved to match with the above MONSTER. We think this a liberal offer, as he being always about like a "roaring lion" may easily be caught. He shall not be detained long, as we are aware the Christian Clergy can do nothing without him.

TO MR. R. CARLILE, DORCHESTER GAOL.

SIR.

IN answer to the letter of your Bradford correspondent Leucippus, in the Republican, No. 15, I have to say ; that, indeed, I do misconceive not only the Doctrines of the Unitarians ; but likewise of many other sects ; because I never had the curiosity to enquire into them, from my own conviction that to gain heaven, does not require any particular form of worship, as long as I act towards, others as I should wish to be done unto me.

Having besides only began to read the Republican from the first number of this volume, I was quite ignorant of Mr.

Heinekin's being of the Unitarian persuasion, and Leucippus by the very next paragraph to that which he quotes, would see, that my intention in sending you the four chapters from the *Bon Sens*, was not only for Mr. H.'s perusal; but likewise for any other of your Christian readers, notwithstanding I am exceedingly obliged to Leucippus for his information respecting the Unitarians.

My chief reading except the Works of Mr. Thos. Paine, Watson refuted, Doubts of Infidels, and indeed most part of your publications; has been in French works which are generally directed against the abuses of the Catholic religion and Priests, and but seldom notice any other sect, which accounts for my being little acquainted with the dogmas of different sects, and as I see your intention to print soon the *Bon Sens*. I would recommend likewise to your notice, as worthy the trouble of a translation, the very excellent work, the Militaire Philosophe.

I am, Sir yours respectfully.

F. A. C.

London, Friday, Oct. 21, 1815.

THE KING'S LATE NEW DEMANDS FOR MONEY CONSIDERED;

*With reference to the real condition of the Labouring
People of this Country.*

THE shameless requisitions of Royalty, were they not the cause of calamity and distress, would be excellent subjects for laughter and ridicule. But, while we are writhing under the various miseries produced by church and state, while we are sinking in the estimation of surrounding nations, and becoming a cypher even in the political world of royalty, while we are groaning in the agonies of despair, almost lost to hope, and desponding in poverty, the vices, meannesses and injustices of princess and rulers pass unnoticed, and even royal follies and popular submission are almost incapable of raising a smile or a frown. The power of acting is taken away, that of thinking is alone left to us, this too much neglected, and we may at least be permitted to lament our lot and deplore the misery which we cannot prevent, and bewail the desolation which daily passes. A most appalling

combination of deadly agents is unanimously working its way into the core of the realm ; and while many of the wealth, grandeur, influence and freedom of the people, as many are sedulously employed in lessening the comforts and influence of the labourers. That I may not be mistaken, I shall carefully point out the perpetrators of this mischief.

Strong in guilt and hypocrisy, and capable of any thing in the shape of evil, stand, first on the list, the notorious lying religious tract societies. The priesthood of the state and the dissenting branch of the same craft, the Magistrates of the country, a dishonest parliament, a corrupt and licentious aristocracy, a swindling exchange, a debased paper currency, a depraved court, a canting, hypocritical, cowardly community close the delinquent catalogue. The last item, not the least, renders the task of the former easy and safe, promises success in the undertaking, and impunity in the event. In those who govern, we find pride, avarice and prejudice joined to meanness, too strong to be operated upon by sense, justice or humanity. They are doomed not to retract : a fatality seems to compel them to the consummation of all possible evil.

The following consideration must beget strong feelings of indignation and disgust. When the labourer is in want of bread in a land of plenty. When his children are perishing before his eyes with hunger and nakedness ; when ready to immolate his offspring to end their miseries ; when with his wife, afraid to love one another for dread of accumulating calamity ; when their desires are restrained by merciless want, and they repel the dictates of nature and voluntarily refrain from procreation for fear of begetting a supernumerary curse on themselves, and when the dreary prospect of illimitable misery before them is only bounded by the succeeding vista of anarchy and incalculable desolation, what must they think ? how must they feel ? They see their little ones pining from want and themselves barely existing in joyless slavery and find themselves taxed with fresh thousands to support the children of their unfeeling plunderers, who riot daily in superabundance and have already more than they can enjoy and scarcely can dissipate.

Royalty, shameless Royalty, comes forward with the impudent importunity of a sturdy beggar, who can despically crave or forcibly rob ; or rather, with the non chalance hauteur or cool effrontery of a well-bred highwayman, who, politely enquiring into the state of your affairs, with a complacent fearless smile on his countenance, and a load-

ed pistol in his hand, only demands the ready trifles you have about you, watch, purse and rings of any value.

I am sorry that our court and legislators oblige us so often to recur to beggars and robbers for suitable comparisons; for we are well aware, that it is only in certain cases where comparisons are odious; but, while under the influence of truth, and indignant at wrong, the etiquette of dandyism and the affected politeness of phrase, are laudably neglected or properly forgotten.

The King's messages to parliament in money concerns, he seldom troubles them except in that case, these are now the only acts of grace, always amount, as far I can see, to a demand. Were the demand made with prudent or cautious concern for the well-being of the people, kept within the bounds of moderation, or even introduced with any kind of admissible apology, we might acquiesce and comply with some degree of satisfaction, although even hunger should stimulate us to reproach.

What are the offspring of kings, to the man who is insulted, enslaved and starving? Why call for the morsel from a famishing peasant's child, to supply the luxury of an infant Royal Duke or the relatively well provided for child of a Royal Duchess? O shameless, rapacious Royalty. For kings and princes, who have so much, who wallow in the luxuries of the earth, who enjoy a paradise every day, to ask for more, from people who are taxed and tythed up to the starving point, feeling famine already rending their heart-strings and want destroying them by piece-meal, is rapacity indeed. To begor to take from them under such circumstances implies a ferocious propensity to plunder, as well as an insatiably avaricious thirst for it in the rulers.—O depravity! what is too mean or too atrocious for thee to perform? Reluctantly submitting to such wanton imposition, amidst stifled murmurs, rising in tones of sorrow and hopeless complaint, is strongly indicative of despair. Its efforts, when strained to the pitch of acting, will effect more in a day, than the vain, unmanly, degrading petitions of a starving populace to a careless, corrupt house of commons could accomplish in any number of years! That our aristocracy can persist to rob and abuse the nation as they do, is astonishing, with the example of France before their eyes, and would almost compel us to adopt Mussulman faith, and to become fatalists; but that we can account for such preposterous proceedings, by a more simple and satisfactory mode of argument. Men possessing emolument and power, no

matter however obtained, never relinquish either while they can by fraud, force or cunning, retain them. Wisdom would dictate to resign the charge or use it for the benefit of their fellow creatures: but pride and depraved sensations confer other sentiments. Even on the day on which justice wrenches plunder and power out of their grasp, they fortify themselves with the impulsive idea, that they can keep them one day longer. And when incapable of contending with success against superior energies, they stand prepared to remonstrate against the justice of the decree which condemns them, as if right was only theirs, and the world and mankind their personal property. When deprived of their usurped power, and of the fruits of their rapacious robbery, they run howling through the world, tormenting mankind with the story of their woes, as if a banditti had robbed them, or fire had destroyed their hard earned substance, and lay impudent claim to pity and condolence, insisting, with clamorous importunity, or the right of regaining their lost plunder, to reinstate them in power, that they may again rob and punish with impunity.

This was actually the case with the French nobility from 1793, until the battle of Waterloo. That a similar fate, at no distant period, awaits the British Nobility, I am certain. Nor ought they to grudge to repine at an age of misery. They stand much in need of a lesson or two from adversity, to restore them to lost humanity. My Lord Bolingbroke, who was something of a political prophet, as well as a sensible man, a fine writer and a heretic, has said, about a hundred years ago, that if ever England was enslaved, it would be when a despotic prince reigned and a corrupt house of parliament legislated for the country; and these, when they meet, will produce both slavery and revolution.*

When the King, the Nobles and minions of government, have obtained all they can obtain, and the people have lost all but their lives, a reaction succeeds, when least expected, they rise unanimous with the simultaneous action and unexpected shock of a winter thunder clap. Hunger and oppression unite all their feelings, destroy the pitiful political barrier of religion, and make them see with Lynx-eyed sagacity their common benefit and common danger. The formidable aspect of despair annihilates all thought of self,

* Then England has had a permanent slavery; for since a Legislature or House of Commons has existed, both have existed together with few exceptions.

R. C.

despises prudence, inspires courage and resolution to draw the sword and throw away the scabbard, and, in proportion to the distress they have suffered, will ever be the misery they inflict and the revenge they take. England's paper money alone seems likely to accomplish such an event.

They who see and sincerely mourn such distracting calamity, have not the power to retard its progress or prevent its approach. The deprecations of misery are ever held in scorn and contempt by the unfeeling prince, the proud peer, the haughty, self-sufficient statesman and the insolent, mercenary, officer. It is only amidst the thunders of vengeance and revenge, amidst the horrors of retributive justice and the crash of falling power, that the voice of the people is heard with attention or their claims to justice admitted to an impartial audience; and even then, we find them cajoled by running, hushed to a calm by false promises, and insinuating flattery, reposing in confidence on the seeming candor of their tyrants, who artfully prepare them for general destruction. The people are like tame Lions or Elephants, they know not their own strength; their peaceful avocations make them habitually cowards, and habit binds them in slavery. It is despair only that can call forth their energies, or guide them to freedom and happiness, by teaching them to despise personal danger and smile at death!

SHEBAGO.